

COMMEMORATING THE SPECIAL
OPERATIONS COMMAND'S 10TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues may not be aware, but this week marks the 10th anniversary of the Special Operations Command, based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa.

The 47,000 soldiers who make up the special operations command are the most elite forces that the U.S. military has to offer. This command coordinates special forces members from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corp who currently operate in 140 countries worldwide. Despite their numbers, range of deployment and unique talents, the Special Operations Command makes up only 1 percent of DOD's budget and 1 percent of the U.S. military. Deployed to some of the most hostile environments in the world, these bold warriors are a constant presence for the United States.

Special forces have been an indispensable asset to the United States in armed conflicts since the American Revolutionary War. Today, the modern special forces operator is prepared to meet both humanitarian and military challenges wherever they are deployed. Teamwork and cooperation are essential for the survival of each member of the unconventional warfare community. In 1987, the special operations command was borne out this need to coordinate the complicated and dangerous missions assigned to special forces members.

In recognition of the anniversary of the Special Operations Command, Orval Jackson of the Tampa Tribune has written a very comprehensive history of the command which I commend to my colleagues attention.

Mr. Speaker I know I speak for all my colleagues in admiration of the sacrifices and service of the men and women who serve and have served in the special forces—many in virtual anonymity.

[From the Tampa Tribune, Apr. 14, 1997]

10 YEARS BOLD

(By Orval Jackson)

TAMPA.—It stands to reason Special Operations forces are on duty in many of the world's trouble spots, such as Bosnia and the Persian Gulf.

More surprising, however, is that Special Operations forces also are deployed to more than 140 nations, providing governments with a variety of military and humanitarian skills.

Most Americans don't know about these missions, because the command, based at MacDill Air Force Base, doesn't publicize them. And that's the whole point: They're special operations.

"Special Operations forces offer a unique, versatile and global joint service force, which continuously operates worldwide," said Army Gen. Hugh Shelton, commander in chief of the unified command.

The successes and wide-ranging tasks of the special forces will be recognized this week as the Special Operations Command commemorates its 10th anniversary.

Many of the deployments, Shelton said, are in areas plagued by disease, starvation, poverty and civil strife—incubators for future insurgencies, humanitarian crises and ethnic conflict.

"U.S. Special Operations forces have become extremely skillful in practicing the art of peace, while still remaining prepared for and preserving the option of force," Shelton said.

Case in point: Somalia. A humanitarian program there in 1992 evolved into a military one the next year. In it, two Special Operations soldiers became the first Americans since Vietnam to receive the Medal of Honor.

In October 1993, Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon and Sgt. 1st Class Randall D. Shughart disregarded their own safety while trying to rescue crewmen from two downed helicopters. Gordon and Shughart held heavily armed crowds at bay until they ran out of ammunition and were killed. The lone survivor of the crash, who was wounded, was taken prisoner and later was released.

Gordon and Shughart were part of about 47,000 active, reserve and national guard forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force that make up the Special Operations Command. Despite its worldwide involvement, it represents only 1 percent of the nation's military and 1 percent of the Defense Department's budget.

Its anniversary week will be highlighted Wednesday when Secretary of Defense William Cohen is presented the Bull Simons Award, given annually to those who embody the spirit, values and skills of a legendary special operator.

Cohen, who was a Republican senator from Maine, and Sam Nunn, a Senate Democrat from Georgia at the time, wrote the legislation that created the Special Operations Command in 1987. Nunn, who is unable to attend the MacDill events, received his Bull Simons Award recently in Atlanta.

Nearing the end of his 34-year career, Simons led a Special Forces raid on the Son Tay prisoner-of-war camp in North Vietnam in 1970. The prisoners had been moved before the forces arrived, but the raid was credited with forcing the North Vietnamese to improve the care of POWs.

Another bold, but ultimately unsuccessful, mission spurred the creation of the Special Operations Command. In 1980, an attempt to rescue 53 American hostages in Iran led to the death of eight military personnel when two rescue aircraft collided in the Iranian desert.

As efforts were under way in the Department of Defense to reform the special forces operations, the process was spurred on by the 1983 terrorist bombing attack that killed 237 marines in Lebanon and the invasion of Grenada, which was successful despite operational problems within the military units.

Then-President Reagan approved establishment of the new command April 13, 1987, and three days later it was activated by the Department of Defense under the command of Army Gen. James Lindsay. It took over the facilities of the U.S. Readiness Command at MacDill, whose missions were transferred to other commands.

During its 10 years, the command has participated in five other major operations in addition to Somalia, including its first big test in December 1989, when more than 4,400 special operations forces participated in operation Just Cause in Panama. It led to the capture of dictator Manuel Noriega.

In 1990-91, more than 9,400 personnel were deployed to operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Last April, Special Operations helicopters flew through some of the worst conditions to reach a mountainside above Dubrovnik, Croatia, where Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown and 34 others were killed when their plane crashed.

In addition to well-publicized military operations, Special Operations forces have a number of lesser-known missions.

They include combating terrorism; seizing or destroying weapons of mass destruction; assisting host countries in civil affairs; conducting rescue missions and antidrug activities; and providing humanitarian assistance.

"I think as you look at the situation we are facing today and in the foreseeable future, there are challenges Special Operation forces should be handling and I see a greater need for them than ever," said retired Army Gen. Carl W. Stiner, who followed Lindsay as commander in chief.

"One significant thing I think we did was keep the focus on readiness and modernization of our forces," Stiner said. "Another was to work with the regional CINCs [commanders in chief], educating them on the utility of Special Operations forces and their capability of assisting in achieving reasonable objectives."

"VISION OF THE FUTURE"—15-YEAR-OLD LEVI TILLEMANN-DICK DISCUSSES THE IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN TWO GENERATIONS—ESSAY WINS NATIONAL CONTEST

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to a young man who at the tender age of 15 has already established himself as a thoughtful analyst of the future. Levi Tillemann-Dick of Denver, CO, was winner of a recent essay competition, "Vision of the Future", sponsored by the Association of Computer Manufacturers [ACM] to examine how changes in computer technology will change our lives over the next 50 years.

The essay contest was held in order to highlight the Association's celebration of the next half-century of computing, and it was conducted with the assistance and cooperation of the magazine Popular Science. The purpose of the contest and the focus of the judges involved in evaluating the essays submitted was getting students to realize that whatever choices they make with computer science will have future implications for society, economy, and across all spectra of life.

The essays were judged on the basis of their creativity and sense of excitement about what future technologies will be like and how they will affect our daily lives. Levi was awarded a college scholarship of \$2,500 for his winning essay—an important incentive for a student in this age when advanced education is essential for young people to reach their full potential in this information age.

Levi Tillemann-Dick, at the age of only 15, is currently studying at Regis College in Denver. Until January of this year he was schooled at home by his mother, Annette Tillemann-Dick, the daughter of our colleague from California, TOM LANTOS.

Levi Tillemann-Dick's winning essay, "Gigatrends: Technology's Impacts Two Generations from Today", reflects the kind of thoughtful education in technology that is essential for the future of our Nation. Mr. Speaker, I ask that this outstanding essay be placed in the RECORD, and I invite my colleagues to read it. It is important as we here in this body consider the effect that technology will have